



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

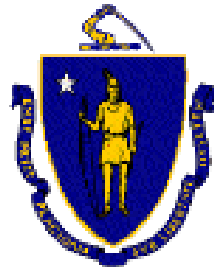


Proposal for an Off-Leash Dog Recreation Area in Belle Isle Marsh Reservation

DCR and Town of Winthrop Public Meeting

Tuesday, July 25, 2017 – 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

**Robert A. DeLeo Winthrop Senior Center Council on Aging
35 Harvard Street, Winthrop, MA 02151**



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Charles D. Baker

Lieutenant Governor

Karyn E. Polito

Energy and Environmental Secretary

Matthew A. Beaton

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

Leo P. Roy



DCR Mission Statement

*To protect, promote and enhance our
common wealth of natural, cultural
and recreational resources
for the well-being of all.*



Purpose of Meeting

- Present proposal for off-leash dog recreation area in Belle Isle Marsh Reservation
- Explain process that resulted in site selection
- Obtain public input
- Discuss next steps



Ongoing DCR Off-Leash Dog Area Initiative

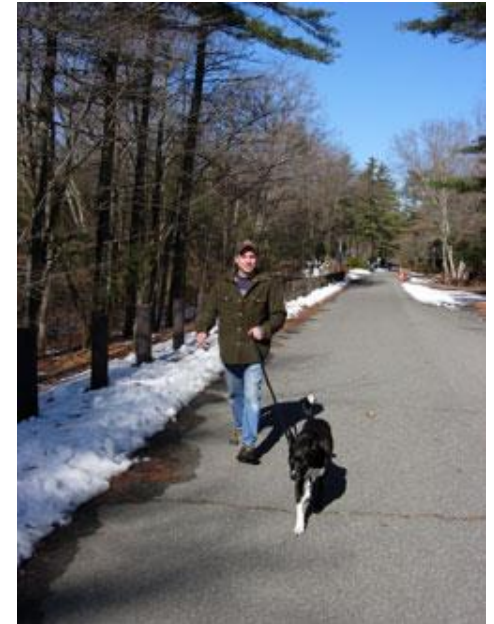
- There is growing need for off-leash dog recreation areas.
- The establishment of these areas requires consideration of natural and cultural resources and other park uses.
- DCR is holding a series of public meetings to engage stakeholders, abutters, and park users in dialogue regarding additional off-leash recreation areas.



Overview/Background

We invite Dog Owners to be Park Users and Park Partners

Dogs and their owners are welcome in DCR's parks, and we encourage all dog owners and their dogs to be respectful of other park users and neighbors. Join us in the stewardship of our parks by being a responsible dog owner and park partner.



Overview/Background

DCR welcomes dogs on-leash at most DCR parks, forests, and reservations. However, there are a number of locations where dogs are not allowed, mostly for public safety, public health, or habitat concerns or deed restriction purposes.

Dogs must be properly licensed and up-to-date on their shots.





Overview/Background

DCR's new regulations ([302 CMR 12.13 and 302 CMR 12.17\(5\)](#)) were effective October 24, 2014 and include the designation of appropriate “off-leash” areas and call for a permit process for commercial dog walkers.

More information at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/recreational-activities/dogs-in-massparks.html>

Commercial Dog Walker Permits

- DCR has a draft Commercial Dog Walkers Permit
- \$100 annual fee for up to four dogs
- \$200 annual fee for up to eight dogs
- No more than eight dogs allowed per permit/walker
- One time application fee of \$35.00

Benefits of Off-Leash Dog Recreational Areas

- Create public spaces for dog owners to recreate with their dogs off-leash
- Dogs learn to socialize/play with other dogs
- Foster community and new friendships
- Create safer parks/neighborhoods, more recreation areas
- Increase dog owner investment in parks

Town of Winthrop



Town Council President Russ Sanford

Council Public Works Subcommittee

Councilor Paul Varone

Councilor Rich Boyajian

Councilor Nick DeVento

Town Manager James McKenna

Asst. to the Town Manager Joseph Domelowicz Jr.

Town of Winthrop



Need for Off-Leash Dog Recreation Area

- Population of about 18,000 people, majority of town is built-out
- 885 registered dogs
- Dogs need a place to exercise and socialize
- With no designated space for Off-Leash Dog Area in Winthrop, dog owners will find other places to exercise their pets off leash

Town of Winthrop Off-Leash Dog Recreation Area Proposal and History



- Pet owners have been asking for a dog park for several years.
- In response, Town Council conducted a total of five open public meetings, including subcommittee meetings, to discuss the issue and identify potential sites.
- Public Works Subcommittee reviewed 13 sites in the Town between September 2016 and January 2017.



Town of Winthrop

Off-Leash Dog Recreation Area

List of Proposed Sites Reviewed

- Veterans Road (Miller Field)
- Coughlin Park
- Ingleside Park
- DPW Tree Farm
- **At Kilmartin Path-Short Leash**
- Pico Beach Park
- DCR Morton St. parcel
- Hannaford Park
- Lewis Lake at Dawes Park
- Town Parcel between Palmyra and Brookfield
- Pond Street Park
- Pico Park
- Lewis lake Trailhead near Willow Ave.



Town of Winthrop

Off-Leash Dog Recreation

Site Selection Criteria

Sites were reviewed for variety of features such as:

- ✓ Access to parking
- ✓ Accessibility to all local residents
- ✓ Appropriateness of activity
- ✓ Support of dog owners and neighbors
- ✓ Ability to construct and maintain
- ✓ Ability to offer amenities (water, lighting...)
- ✓ Level of disruption expected.



Town of Winthrop

Site Selection & Subsequent Actions

- Based on the criteria and review of 13 sites, the Council Public Works Subcommittee deemed the "Short Leash" site within the Belle Isle Reservation to be most favorable across all categories.
- The Winthrop Town Manager brought the selected site to DCR and met with DCR Commissioner Leo Roy to discuss feasibility - December 2016
 - Town has committed to building and maintaining dog park, just as we have committed to the Belle Isle Marine Ecology Park
 - Local dog owner group has privately raised several thousand dollars to help – more is possible provided site is affirmed by DCR.

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Proposed “Short Leash” Dog Park Area



Town of Winthrop



Proposed Design Features Subject to Permitting and Budget

- Separate space for large and small dogs
- Double-gate entry
- 3,300 sq. ft. to 4,500 sq. ft. in size
- Appropriate fencing
- Trash receptacles
- Water dispensing
- Small shelter
- Recreation apparatus

Winthrop Dog Park
Site #5 Short Leash



Town of Winthrop Subsequent Actions



- Based on the recommendation of the Council Public Works Subcommittee and discussion with DCR, in February 2017, the full Town Council voted to approve the selected site.
- At that time, the Town heard concerns and reservations expressed by the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh.
- The Town Manager and municipal department heads met with representatives of the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh. The Town Manager agreed to seek the opinion of Mass Audubon about potential impact to the birds and wildlife.

Town of Winthrop

Mass Audubon Review



- In March 2017, the Town engaged Mass Audubon to review the proposed dog park location, the Belle Isle Marsh ACEC, and Critical Bird Area and provide a written report about the potential impacts to the birds and wildlife in the marsh.
- At the end of April 2017, Mass Audubon, after visiting the site and reviewing the proposed location, delivered a memo that essentially stated that the proposed off-leash dog recreation area would at the least not increase disruption to birds and wildlife and would likely reduce disruption.



DCR Next Steps

- Public comment period open to August 15, 2017
- DCR review of public comments
- DCR assess community support for this site and make decision. – Fall 2017

Q&A / Discussion



Additional Information

For more information:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/public-meetings/>

If you have comments or suggestions on this project:

Submit online:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/submit-public-comments/>

Write: Department of Conservation and Recreation
Office of Public Outreach
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

Deadline: **Tuesday, August 15, 2017**

Note: Public comments submitted to DCR may be posted on the DCR website in their entirety and no information, including personal contact information, may be redacted.

If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations at 617-626-4973 or Mass.Parks@state.ma.us.